

REMARKS

Applicant cancels claim 12, amends claims 1, 4, 5, and 10, and adds claims 14-16 such that claims 1-11 and 13-16 are pending in this application. Applicant initially notes with appreciation that the Examiner has identified allowable subject matter in claims 4-9. Applicant respectfully requests allowance of all the pending claims.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §112

The Examiner rejects claims 4-9 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctively claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, the Examiner objects to the use of the phrase “moves linearly” in claim 4. In response, Applicant amends claim 4 to claim this in structural form by amending the claim to read “is linearly movable”. Although not mentioned by the Examiner, Applicant amends claim 5 to correct similar functional language.

The Examiner also objects to claim 5 because the Examiner believes that the “end member” is unclear. The Examiner states that the “end member” is identified as being the hook end in claim 3, but the slot appears to be in the opposite end from the hook. Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner and submits that claim 3 does not state that the end member “is” the hook, but instead recites that the end member “has” a hook. The end member (identified as reference number 50 in Fig. 3) includes both the hook (66) and the slot (68). Applicant respectfully submits that claim 5 is not unclear.

Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to remove the rejection of claims 4-9.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §§102 & 103

The Examiner rejects claims 1-3 and 10-13 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over United States Patent No. 2,286,332 (“Bleyer”).

Claim 1 recites a filter screen for use in filtering water. The filter screen includes a frame, a grid assembly, a continuous unbroken drive chain, and a screen panel. The grid assembly is supported by the frame for movement. The grid assembly includes a continuous unbroken drive chain having multiple guide links joined together in end-to-end relation and defining joints between the guide links. The grid assembly also includes multiple seal plates positioned in end-to-end

relation and overlapping the joints between the guide links. The screen panel is coupled to one of the multiple guide links for selective movement between an operating condition and a maintenance condition. In the operating condition, the screen panel is fixed relative to the guide link for movement with the guide link and for filtering water. In the maintenance condition, the screen panel is pivotable relative to the guide link to permit access to the filter screen. One of the multiple seal plates is positioned between the guide link and the screen panel.

Bleyer discloses a chain link attachment for traveling water screens. Each water screen (14) includes a generally rectangular frame having end plates (22) and transverse members (24, 25). A flange (26) is secured to the end plate (22) and is disposed laterally of the end plate (22) to cover the full width of the chain (12) (i.e., guide link). The flange (26) is perpendicular to the end plate (22) and is parallel to a pivot axis (See pins 13) of the chain (12).

Bleyer does not teach or suggest a seal plate positioned between the guide link and the screen panel. Rather, Bleyer discloses a flange (26) that is positioned to the side of the screen panel (14) and above the guide link (12). Bleyer does not teach or suggest any element whatsoever positioned between the guide link (12) and the screen panel (14).

The Examiner appears to be taking the position that the combination of the end plate (22) and the flange (26) teach the claimed seal plate. However, Applicants respectfully submit that Bleyer clearly indicates that the end plate (22) is part of the screen panel (14). Therefore, the end plate (22) defines the end of the screen panel (14) and cannot be considered to be between the screen panel and the guide link, as claimed.

Therefore, Bleyer does not teach or suggest or render obvious the subject matter defined by independent claim 1. Accordingly, independent claim 1 is allowable. Claims 2-11 and 13-16 depend from allowable independent claim 1 and are allowable for the same and other reasons.

For example, dependent claim 10 recites the limitations of independent claim 1 and further specifies that the seal plate is coupled to the guide link for movement with the guide link. Bleyer discloses a flange (26) that is not coupled to the guide link (12), but is rather coupled to the end plate (22) for movement with the end plate (22). Therefore, Bleyer also does not teach or suggest or render obvious the subject matter defined by dependent claim 10.

Dependent claim 11 recites the limitations of independent claim 1 and further specifies that the guide link includes a bearing surface that engages a tracking system of the filter screen, and that the seal plate includes a surface projecting past the bearing surface to maintain the drive chain

on the tracking system by deterring outward lateral movement of the drive chain. Bleyer does not teach or suggest a bearing surface in engagement with a tracking system. Rather, Bleyer discloses the use of rollers (28) within an enclosed track. Further, Bleyer does not teach a seal plate surface that extends past the bearing surface to deter outward lateral movement. Instead, Bleyer discloses an enclosed channel that prevents the chain from moving in an outward lateral direction.

Therefore, Bleyer also does not teach or suggest or render obvious the subject matter defined by dependent claim 11.

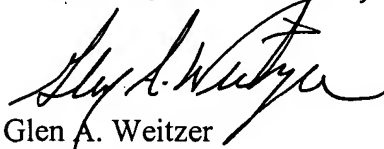
Dependent claim 14 recites the limitations of independent claim 1 and further specifies that the seal plate does not move relative to the guide link when the screen panel is moved between the operating and maintenance conditions. As discussed above, the end plate (22) of Bleyer is part of the screen panel (14) and the flange (26) of Bleyer is integrally connected to the end plate (22) of the screen panel (14). Both the end plate (22) and the flange (26) move relative to the guide link (12) when the screen panel (14) is pivoted relative to the guide link (12). Therefore, Bleyer also does not teach or suggest or render obvious the subject matter defined by dependent claim 14.

Dependent claim 15 recites the limitations of independent claim 1 and further specifies that one of the joints defines a pivot axis, and that the seal plate defines a plane that is perpendicular to the pivot axis. Bleyer discloses a flange (26) that defines a plane that is parallel to the pivot axis. Therefore, Bleyer also does not teach or suggest or render obvious the subject matter defined by dependent claim 15.

Dependent claim 16 recites the limitations of independent claim 1 and further specifies that the screen panel includes a generally rectangular frame including an upper member, a lower member, and two end members each connecting respective ends of the upper and lower members. Claim 16 further recites that the seal plate is positioned between one of the end members of the screen panel and the guide link. Bleyer does not teach or suggest any element whatsoever between the guide link (12) and the end plate (22) of the screen panel (14). Therefore, Bleyer also does not teach or suggest or render obvious the subject matter defined by dependent claim 16.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney should the Examiner determine that such action would facilitate the prosecution and allowance of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glen A. Weitzer", written over the typed name.

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